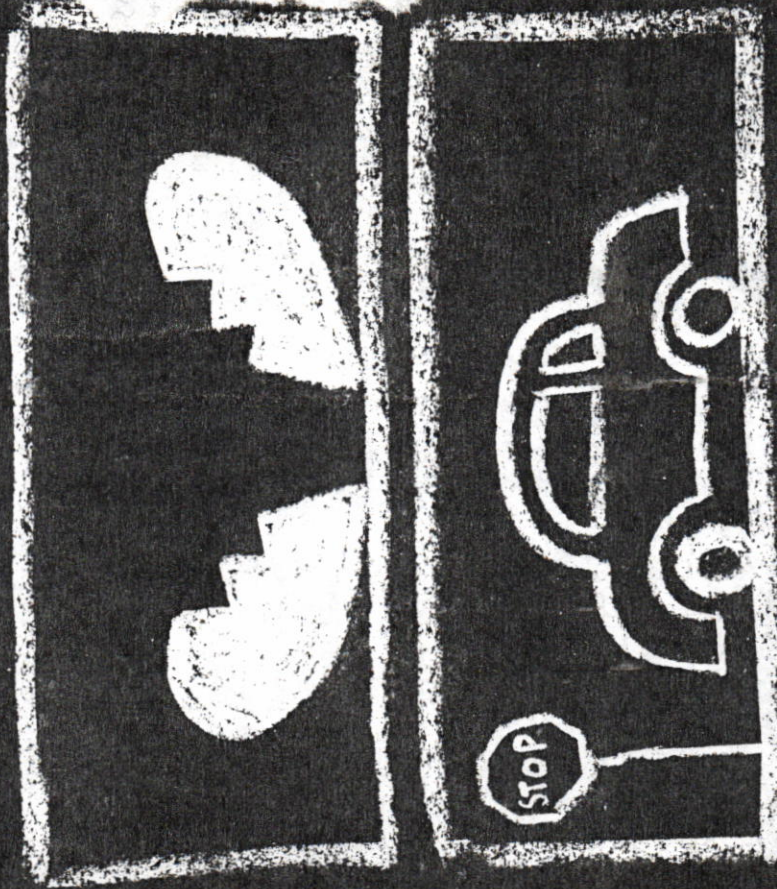
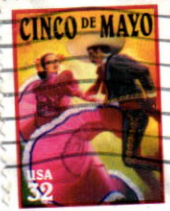
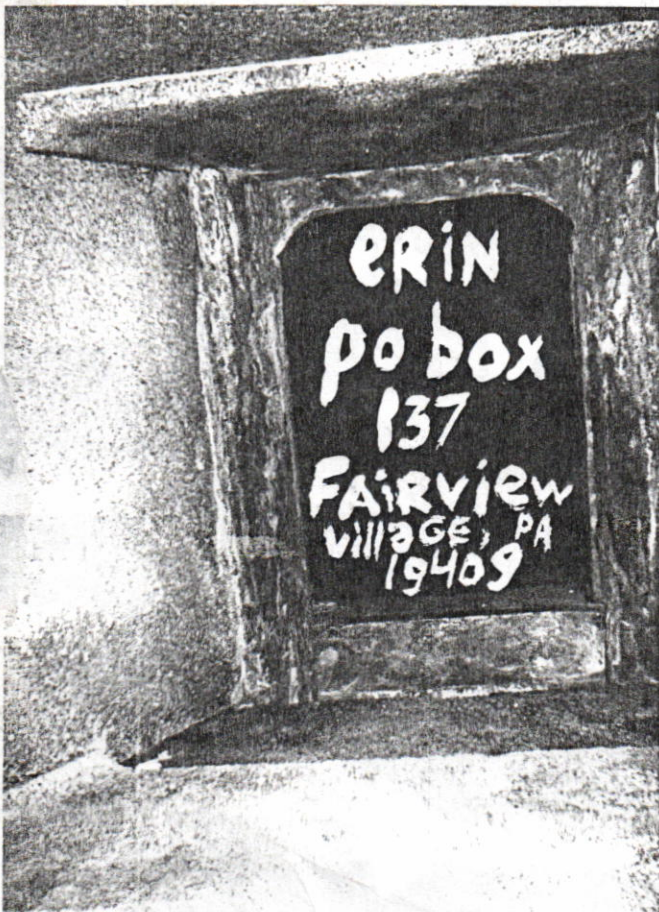


Death and
Tortillas 14



BROKEN HEARTS & BROKEN
ODOMETERS HAVE LOGGED
TOO MANY MILES.



molly - I read a bit of tiger voyage
at my friend carolee's house here in
columbus & promptly had to copy
the whole "I find it astounding
that no one's fallen in love with
me" passage ^{on to} the cover of
my journal.
touché!
will you
trade?

MOLLY [scribbles]
[scribbles] e. [scribbles] ST
BKLYN NY [scribbles]

originally from [scribbles]

JANUARY 1998

DEANNA HAD A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE WHEN SHE TOLD ME THAT STORY ABOUT THE ALBERTA BOAT GUY. YOU SEE, BACK WHEN THE SETTLERS BEGAN INHABITING THE CANADIAN PRAIRIE, LEGEND SAYS THAT THE HIGH WINDS & ENDLESS SKY DROVE THEM TO INSANITY. ONE GUY WANTED TO ESCAPE SO BADLY THAT HE SCROUNGED UP WHAT LITTLE WOOD HE COULD FIND ON THE TREELSS' PLAINS OF ALBERTA, & HE BUILT A BOAT, FULLY INTENT ON PUSHING IT ALL THE WAY TO HIS BELOVED ATLANTIC OCEAN. HE NEVER DID MAKE IT THERE, BUT HE MADE IT AS FAR SASKATCHEWAN, SHE SAYS, AND THAT'S NO SMALL FEAT IN ITSELF.

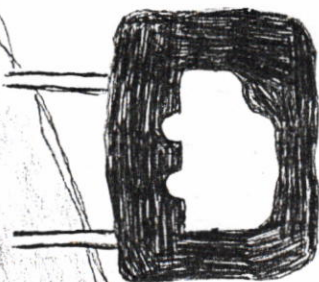
I GUESS HE STRUCK A CHORD WITH ME ON SOME LEVEL - GIVING HIMSELF A REASON TO EXIST FOR THE TIME BEING, EVEN IF IT'S NOT NECESSARILY ACCEPTABLE OR EVEN HEALTHY. A COPING MECHANISM OF SORTS. HE NEVER MADE IT TO THE OCEAN, BUT MAYBE HE WASN'T SUPPOSED TO. MAYBE SASKATCHEWAN AFFORDED HIM SOME DEGREE OF PEACE THAT ALBERTA LACKED, EVEN IF IT FELT SHORT OF ACTING AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR NOVA SCOTIA. MAYBE MERELY SURVIVAL, GIVEN HIS STATE, WAS ENOUGH... LIKE IT IS FOR THE RATS IN THE TUNNELS OF CHICAGO'S SUBWAY SYSTEM. I SEE THEM SCURRYING ABOUT THE TRACKS IN BETWEEN TRAINS, & I WONDER HOW THEY DO IT. LIVING ON FUMES & CARBON, GRABBING BITS OF VITALITY IN BETWEEN THE RED & PURPLE LINE SCHEDULES. I GUESS THEY'RE NOT DIFFERENT FROM US, THOUGH, REALLY... GRABBING BITS OF VITALITY IN BETWEEN JOBS, SEMESTERS, DEPRESSIONS, & PERIODS OF COMPLETE NUMBNESS. I END UP SPENDING MOST OF MY TIME TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO MAKE THE IN-BETWEENS LONGER IN DURATION.

I'M NOT GOING TO GIVE YOU ANY UPDATES ON MY LIFE IN THIS INTRO: WHERE I AM OR HOW I'M DOING. BY THE TIME THIS REACHES YOU IT LIKELY WILL HAVE CHANGED ANYWAY. IN 1998 I PLAN ON LEAVING NORTH AMERICA FOR A SPELL, WHICH IS EXCITING BECAUSE I'VE NEVER DONE IT BEFORE. I ALSO WANT TO RESEARCH LIBERACEY LIFE, BECAUSE I'M RELATED TO HIM, & THE KING OF PRUSSIA'S LIFE, BECAUSE THE MONSTER-MALL I GREW UP NEAR IS NAMED AFTER HIM. THE PROBLEM IS THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL KINGS OF PRUSSIA & I MIGHT PICK THE WRONG ONE. UM, THANKS TO ALL THE FISHIES IN THE SEA THAT KEEP ME



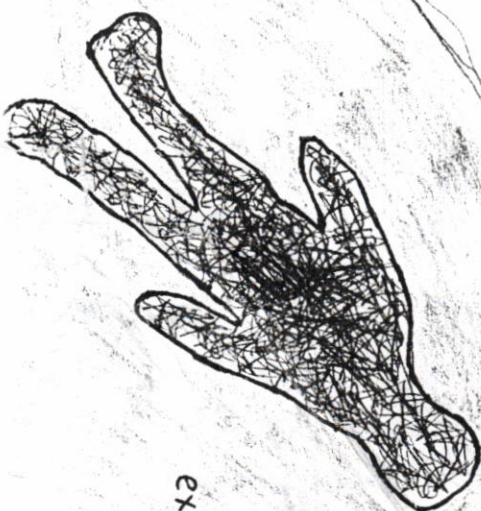
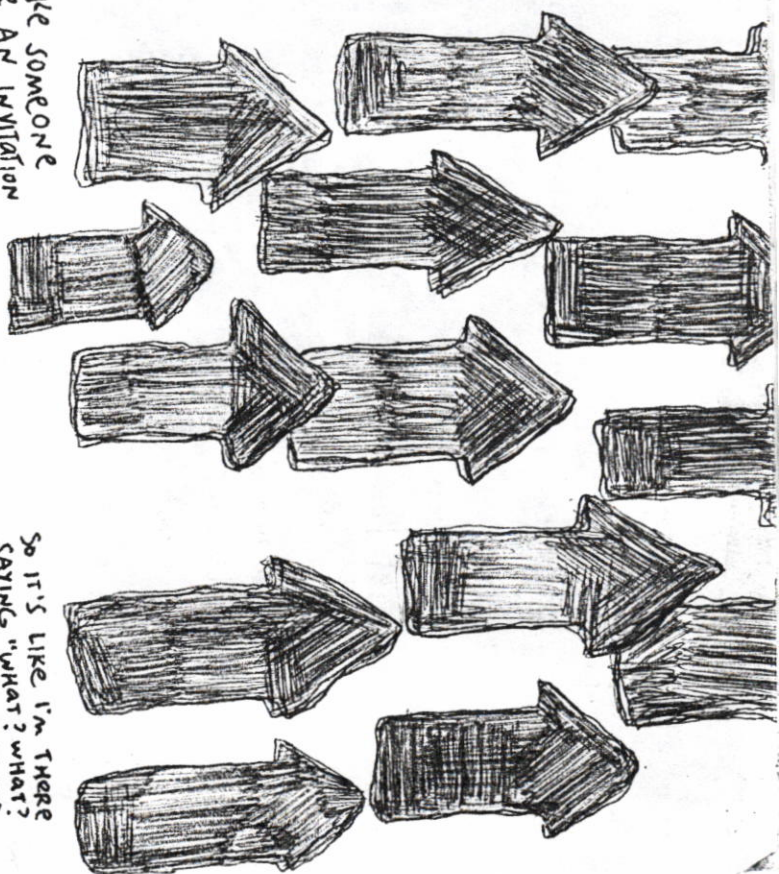
FROM DROWNING.
YOU KNOW WHO YOU ARE...
COPIES OF DEATH & TORTILLAS
ARE ONE DOLLAR OR 2 STAMPS
POSTPAID. I'M ALL OVER THE PLACE
BUT MY ADDRESS IS CONSISTENT:
EPIM MCWILLIAMS
PO BOX 137
FAIRVIEW VLG., PA 15409
MAIL IS FORWARDED. PLEASE, BE PATIENT.

IT'S LIKE SOMEONE SENT ME AN INVITATION THAT SAYS "MEET ME HERE AT NOON, IT'S URGENT!" AND THEN I GET TO THE APPOINTED TIME & THE OTHER PERSON HAS NO MEMORY OF EVEN HAVING WRITTEN THE NOTE OR OF ANY NEED TO SEE ME.



SO IT'S LIKE I'M THERE SAYING "WHAT? WHAT? WHAT IS SO URGENT? ARE YOU IN TROUBLE? DO YOU NEED HELP? AND THE OTHER PERSON IS LIKE "WHO ARE YOU?"

-PAM DAVIS



EXACTLY, PAM
EXACTLY.

Lives, those things that are givens-home, love, community, commitment, true & deep friendship. I have gained much, that is true, but what I've lost may be even greater. Four years have transpired in which I've not seen the seasons unfold in one set location. Every day now I swear I've reached my breaking point, & still every day I push past to a newer one. And I keep wondering when the day will come on which all the pushing in the world won't do me an ounce of good.



I found this picture in south portland the other day & couldn't help but smile. maybe this kid has it all figured out. he only knows that it's warm & he feels like dancing. got it better than the rest of us.

State line

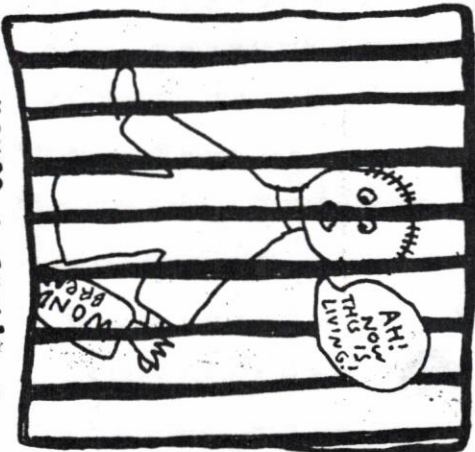


I GUESS IT ONLY MADE SENSE THAT I'D END UP SPENDING MY CHRISTMAS ON THE GREYHOUND. IT HAD BECOME SUCH A FIXTURE IN MY LIFE THAT IT WAS CERTAINLY CLOSER TO HOME THAN MY BELOVED CHILDHOOD PLAYGROUND OF TROOPER, PENNSYLVANIA WOULD EVER BE. THE OL' DOG HAD BECOME THE CLOSEST THING TO FAMILY I'D KNOWN, & I WAS EVEN STARTING TO LEARN HOW TO SLEEP ON A TWO-SEATER. TWAS PERFECT, THEN, THAT I PULLED INTO A BOSTON BLANKETED WITH SNOW ON DECEMBER TWENTY-FIFTH, EN ROUTE TO MY LONG-AWAITED EMPLOYMENT WITH A SKI RESORT IN VERMONT. NO SNOWBOARD LESSONS WOULD BE TAUGHT BY MOI: I'D BE A LOWLY DISHWASHER, WHICH WAS JUST FINE BY ME. WE PULLED INTO BELLOW'S FALLS AT NOON. I WAS QUITE CONTENT TO EAT A MAPLE LOULY & LOOK AT PICTURE BOOKS OF HISTORIC NEW ENGLAND UNTIL THE 3:00 PUTLAND-BOUND BUS PULLED UP. FLETCHER'S VARIETY STORE AFTER ALL WAS THE ONLY PLACE OPEN IN TOWN. NOT THAT I DIDN'T TRY TO PROVE OTHERWISE. HAVING NO BOOTS, THOUGH, I DECIDED TO TAKE MY MOM'S ADVICE - PUTTING PLASTIC GROCERY BAGS OVER MY SOCKS WAS JUST THE TRICK TO KEEP WATER FROM ENTERING MY THIN SNEAKERS. KILLING A FEW HOURS IN "THE FALLS" WAS BAGY GAMES, IT'S TRUE, BUT WHEN THE 3 O'CLOCK DRIVER DECIDED TO LEAVE WITHOUT ME (DESPITE THE FACT THAT I STOOD AT THE DEPOT WITH BAG IN HAND), THE SITUATION LOOKED PRETTY GRIM. PLANTERS PEANUTS WERE A POOR EXCUSE FOR A HOLIDAY DINNER, THE NEXT BUS WASN'T DUE IN TIL 8 PM, & FLETCHER'S WAS CLOSING AT 5:30. IT WAS A GOOD THING THAT THE CASHIER, STELLA, WAS SUCH A FINE HUMAN BEING. SHE TOLD ME ABOUT HER CHILDREN, ALL IN THEIR FORTIES BY NOW, WHO WERE RAISED JUST OVER THE RIVER IN NEW HAMPSHIRE. SHE LET ME USE THE BASEMENT BATHROOM. I COULD HARDLY MAKE MY WAY TO THE BRICK-WALLED CUBICLE WHAT WITH ALL THE SUNDAY EDITIONS OF THE BOSTON GLOBE, BUT I COULDN'T HAVE IMAGINED A MORE BEAUTIFUL LABYRINTH. I WOULD'VE LIKED TO JUST MOVE INTO THAT BASEMENT, SET UP CAMP ON THE CONCRETE FLOOR, & INVITE ALL MY FRIENDS TO JOIN ME FOR A YEAR-LONG SLUMBER PARTY IN THE MOUNTAIN TOWN. I SUPPOSE IT WASN'T ENTIRELY OUT OF THE QUESTION, EITHER: STELLA TOLD ME THAT THE THREE-FLOOR GOREFRONT COST \$200 A MONTH TO RENT IN ITS ENTIRETY. I SCARCELY BELIEVED HER AT FIRST, BUT THEN I REMEMBERED THAT THIS WAS, IN FACT, BELLOW'S FALLS. OPENING UP A PUNK HOUSE DISGUISED AS A BUSINESS PROBABLY WOULDN'T GO OVER TOO WELL IN THE TINY COMMUNITY, & BESIDES: IF THE LOCAL GROCERY WASN'T HIRING, I'D LIKELY FIND MYSELF COMPLETELY OUT OF WORK. EVENTUALLY, HOWEVER, 6 O'CLOCK HAD ROLLED AROUND, & WHEN SHE COULD DAWDLE & STALL NO LONGER, MY GERIATRIC FRIEND CLOSED THE STORE. I TAPE RECORDED NON-EXISTANT TRAFFIC JAMS TO KEEP WARM UNTIL THE 8 O'CLOCK BUS PULLED UP. LUDLOW-BOUND, AT LAST! THE TROJAN HORSE HOSTEL WOULD'VE BEEN A TOLERABLE PLACE TO LAY MY HEAD IF IT WASN'T FOR THAT LADY. HER FRIENDS TOLD HER THEY "DIDN'T HAVE ROOM" FOR HER IN THEIR CUSH COMBO, BUT I SUSPECTED THAT IT MIGHT'VE HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT I COULD SMELL HER WITH THE DOOR CLOSED IT WAS AN ODOOR INSUFFERABLE EVEN BY ME WHO OCCASIONALLY GOES AS LONG AS A WEEK WITHOUT SHOWERING. DID I MENTION THAT HER SNORING WOULD'VE RIVALED GODZILLA'S? I SLEPT ON THE FLOOR THAT NIGHT. OH TEAH, THE JOB NEVER QUITE WORKED OUT. ALTHOUGH I'D BEEN PROMISED FULL-TIME WORK & TEMPORARY FREE HOUSING, I ENDED UP WITH 5-HOUR SHIFTS & \$500 PERKS. I WANTED TO WASH DISHES, I GOT STUCK SELLING CANDY BARS AND DANISHES. I WENT HOME TO MOMMY. I WOULDN'T TRY TO LIVE IN VERMONT AGAIN. NO, THAT STATE WAS BETTER SAVED FOR SUMMER TRIPS & DAYDREAMS.

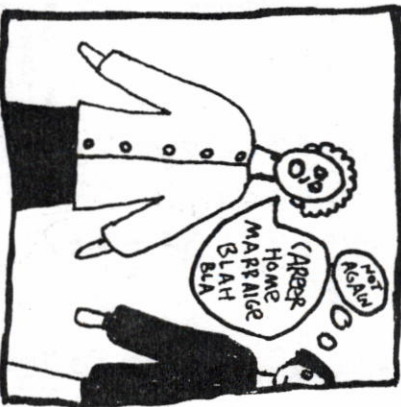
MAKING SENSE OF IT



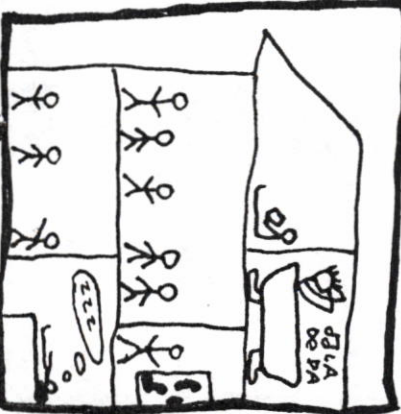
QUITE FRANKLY, I'M TERRIFIED OF LIFE- & WHERE MINE MIGHT BE HEADED-RIGHT NOW. I JUST WANT AN EMPTY ROOM FOR A MONTH TO SIT & THINK, & SOME FOOD...



...MAYBE I SHOULD GO & PULL SOME CRAZY STUNT TO GET ME LANDED IN PRISON, HUH? SOMEHOW, THAT'S NOT THE KIND OF SOLITUDE & SANITY I'M ENVISIONING. THE BARS MIGHT GET IN THE WAY OF MY THOUGHTS...



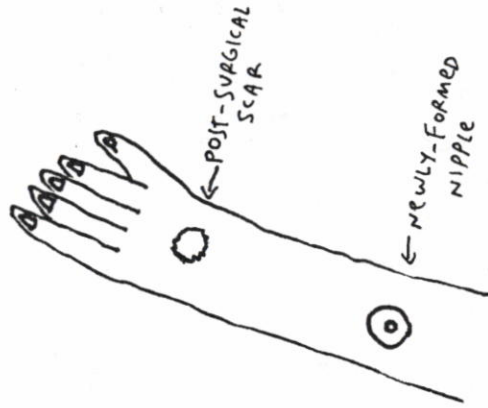
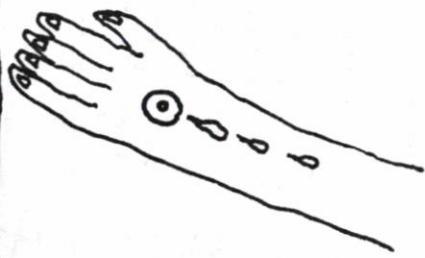
EVERYONE KEEPS ASKING ME WHEN I'M GOING TO "SETTLE DOWN" - EVEN THOUGH I'VE LONG REGRETTED THEIR PESTERING, I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER THE SAME THING MYSELF. I'LL ALWAYS HAVE WANDERLUST, BUT THERE ARE SOME GOALS THAT ARE HARD TO ACHIEVE WHEN GREYHOUNDS ARE HOME.



I WANT A BIG, OLD HOUSE SO THAT I CAN INVITE ALL THE TRAVELLERS PASSING THRU TOWN TO VISIT ME...IT'D BE THE OTHER WAY AROUND, FOR A CHANGE. SOME FOLKS RESENT SUCH CHAOS, BUT I THRIVE ON IT.

crazy how, if you think about it, your fingers would freeze off if you exposed them to the elements at this time of year. i've got seaweed stuck on my shoe & there's seaweed hiding 'neath the iced-over tide pools here, and i can't help but think that maybe the ocean is exactly what i needed all along. it seems like such a simple equation, really, but i know it's a lot more complicated than that. my problem is that i want everything, everywhere, all at once. i know the majest summer cornfields that peek of prosperity, & shenandoah autumn, & i know these winter waves that slap maine's craggy coast with the smugness of a warrior who knows he'll be the necessary victor - because it's like deanna said last night, perched precariously on one of these very rocks. the ocean doesn't care a smidge for our outcomes, only that it keeps with prescribed tides & forms triangles in the caribbean. bremuda: i wonder if that's where my idealism has gone. it's the one thing that has always kept me tethered to this semblance of a life, but lately even it seems to be going by the wayside. sun this bright is enough to trick me into believing that it's not december upon us but august. that i don't need to cultivate optimism in this season because it'll happen on its own. everyone keeps telling me that lives work themselves out. but me? i'm not so sure. for twenty-two years i have avoided those things that form the crux of most folks'

Creepy sex dreams • Creepy sex dreams • Creepy sex dreams



I DREAMT THAT I HAD A LACTATING NIPPLE ON MY FOREARM. I RATHER LIKED IT, IF I RECALL CORRECTLY, BUT EVERYONE KEPT TELLING ME TO HAVE IT REMOVED. FINALLY I HAD THE BIG OPERATION, & MY NIPPLE WAS AMPUTATED.

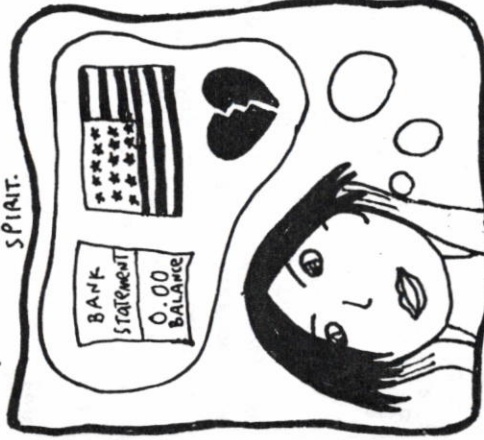


I DREAMT THAT THE WORLD'S MOST WELL-KNOWN MAN DISPLAYED HIS COCK FOR ALL THE WORLD TO SEE AT A STATE FAIR EXHIBIT. CURIOUSLY ENOUGH, IT WAS IN DICKINSON, NORTH DAKOTA!

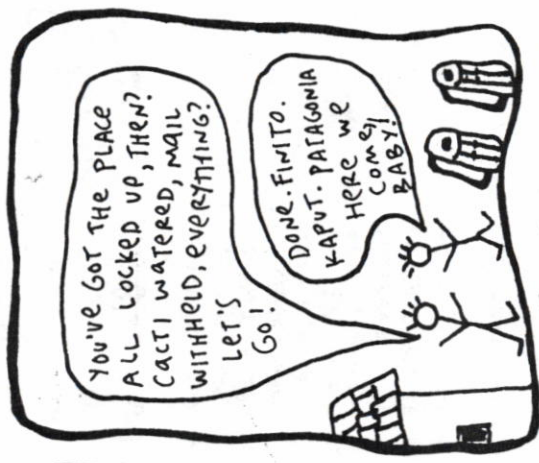
*PS: IN ADDITION TO HER CREEPY SEX DREAMS, ERIN ALSO HAD A DREAM THAT SHE GOT \$7000 FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA AT SANTA CRUZ FOR BEING A ZINE GEEK. HEY, DOESN'T HURT TO DREAM!!!



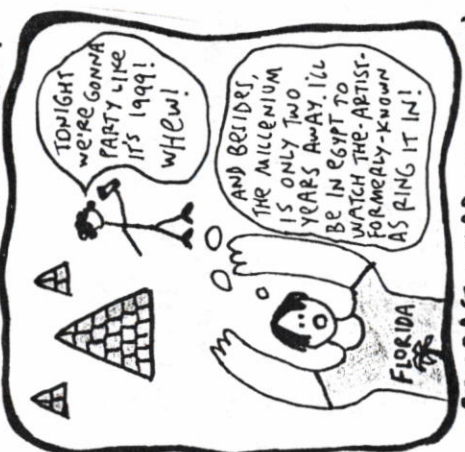
I CAME UP WITH THIS CRAZY SCHEME, VOWED I'D OPEN UP A YOUTH HOSTEL SOMEDAY. MOVE TO PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER. PERHAPS I'D BEEN READING TOO MUCH ANNE OF GREEN GABLES, BUT FANTASY'S GOOD FOR THE SPIRIT.



SADLY, THE GRIM REALITY STILL STARES ME IN THE FACE DESPITE MY LOFTY DREAMS: I'M NOT CANADIAN, I'M NOWHERE CLOSE TO BEING IN LOVE, & THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE IS A VERY EXPENSIVE PLANE TICKET AWAY...



MY GILBERT-OR GILBERTA, AS IT WERE-BLYTHE WOULD COME ALONG, & I'D FALL IN LOVE AS RELUCTANTLY AS ANNE DID, & WE'D RUN OUR YOUTH HOSTEL FROM APRIL TO OCTOBER & SPEND THE WINTER IN THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE. IT WAS THE BEST LIFE I COULD EVER POSSIBLY IMAGINE.



..AT LEAST I HAD MY HEALTH! AND THOUGH IT WASN'T VERY ROMANTIC, I WAS CONTENT JUST TO DAYDREAM ABOUT A CHEAP COUCH IN A FRIENDLY PUNK HOUSE. LESS GLAMOROUS, YES, BUT MORE LIKELY TO MATERIALIZE IN THIS CENTURY!

Back to the desert



IT'S FUNNY HOW, WHEN YOU LOVE SOMETHING, YOU GET REAL PROUD OF IT EVEN THOUGH IT'S NOT YOURS. IT DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU & YOU DIDN'T HELP CREATE IT, BUT THERE YOU ARE, PROUD OF IT ALL THE SAME. SOMETIMES YOU THINK A PERSON IS REALLY BEAUTIFUL, FOR EXAMPLE. ALL YOUR FRIENDS WONDER WHAT YOU COULD POSSIBLY BE THINKING. "HAVE YOU BEEN SMOKING CACAC?" THEY ASK. I MEAN, HIS TEETH ARE MESSED UP & SHE'S GOT ROCKMARKS ALL OVER & SHE'S GOT A HUGE, GROOMED NOSE. YOU REMAIN CONVINCED THAT YOU'RE RIGHT, THOUGH: FUCK YOUR FRIENDS! YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO OUGHTA BE IN PICTURES WHEN YOU SEE EM.

IT WAS NEVER LIKE THAT WITH HER.

SHE WAS ONE OF THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE & NOT ONLY IN THE EYES OF A SELECT FEW BEHOLDERS, SHE WAS BEAUTIFUL, YES, & I HADN'T SEEN HER IN THREE YEARS. THE FIRST GIRL I FELT FOR. I SHOULD'VE KNOWN I'D END UP BACK IN THAT SLEAZY SOUTHWEST CITY SOMER OR LATER. I MEAN, I COULD HARDLY AVOID IT FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.

NEVERMIND THE FACT THAT I'D SCORED THE WHITE PAGES EVERY YEAR SINCE 1945, LOOKING FOR HER CURRENT ADDRESS WHEN SHE FELT OUT OF TOUCH WITH ME. THE TRUTH WAS THAT I WASN'T READY TO SEE HER YET, TO ACKNOWLEDGE WHAT SHE'D MEANT. IT FIGURED, THEN, THAT I HAD SCARCELY BEEN IN TOWN FOR

A DAY WHEN I THOUGHT I SAW HER, SITTING ON A BENCH OUTSIDE THE FEMINIST BOOKSTORE ON FOURTH AVENUE. I THOUGHT I SAW HER, YES, BUT I COULDN'T BE QUITE SURE. WHO WAS THE ANGEL STANDING TWENTY YARDS AWAY FROM ME? IT LOOKED LIKE MY OLD FRIEND, BUT HER HAIR WAS ALL WRECK:

CUT HAZARDELY, WITH LONGER PIECES IN FRONT & SHORTER ONES IN THE BACK, AND DYED SOME ODD SHADE OF MAGENTA. SHE WORE A THICK FLANNEL SHIRT OVER HER SKIRT, HIDING LIMBS THAT

MIGHT'VE HELPED ME DISTINGUISH HER FROM AN IMPASTER.

SHE'D ALWAYS BEEN NOTABLY SKINNY, WHILE I'D ALWAYS STRUGGLED WITH MY WEIGHT. I BINGED ON FOOD TO STIFLE EMOTIONS, BUT SHE WOULD'VE RATHER USED ACID TO FORGET. MADE ME SAD, WATCHING

HER GET HIGH. IT'S ALWAYS MADE ME SAD TO WATCH PEOPLE I ACHED FOR GET HIGH, EVEN IF IT'S BY THEIR OWN VOLITION. MAYBE

I FEEL LIKE THE DRUGS GIVE THEM SOMETHING I NEVER COULD, BUT IT'S MORE LIKELY THAT I KNOW I'LL JUST NEVER REALLY UNDERSTAND. JUST

LIKE I KNEW I HAD A LUMP IN MY THROAT THAT DAY. MY HEART BEAT OUT OF ITS CHEST AS I TRIED TO WALK CLOSER, TRIED TO LOOK INTO HER

FACE, TRIED TO SEE IF IT WAS HER. BUT I COULDN'T, SO I WENT INTO THE THIEF SHOP. SHE'D BEEN THERE AN HOUR, SURELY SHE'D

SIT ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES. I NEEDED FIVE MINUTES TO REGAIN MY BEARINGS. I CAME OUTSIDE & SHE HAD DISAPPEARED. I OFTEN THINK

WE'LL NEVER MEET AGAIN. I OFTEN WONDER IF IT'S BETTER THIS WAY.

Settle down, young lady

IT WAS THE LITTLE THINGS ABOUT STABILITY THAT I MISSED. I HAD A SMALL PILE OF STUFF THAT I CARRIED AROUND IN MY BACKPACK JUST IN CASE SOME SEMI-PERMANENCE SUCK UP ON ME. THERE WAS A POSTER OF MY FAVORITE DEFUNCT DYKE-PACK GAZETTE & A PICTURE THAT REBECCA TOOK OF A BARN AMIDST NORTH DAKOTA GRASSLANDS. I LOVED THAT PHOTOGRAPH-IT WAS LIKE THE ONES I TORE FROM YARD SALE TEN CENT NATIONAL GEOGRAPHICS, ONLY BETTER. RED BARN, GREEN GRASS, BLUE SKY STREAKED WITH WHITE. EVERYTHING WAS SO VIVID THAT IT LOOKED LIKE A STILL FROM A COLOR-SAFE BLEACH TELEVISION COMMERCIAL. SOMETIMES I WOULD THINK ABOUT LIVING IN NORTH DAKOTA & TAKING ART CLASSES AT DICKINSON COLLEGE. IT SEEMED LIKE A PRETTY IDYLIC LIFE, BUT I KNEW IT WAS PROBABLY BEST LEFT AS A FANTASY, A DREAM FOR BORED PICNIC LUNCHEES IN LATE SEPTEMBER.

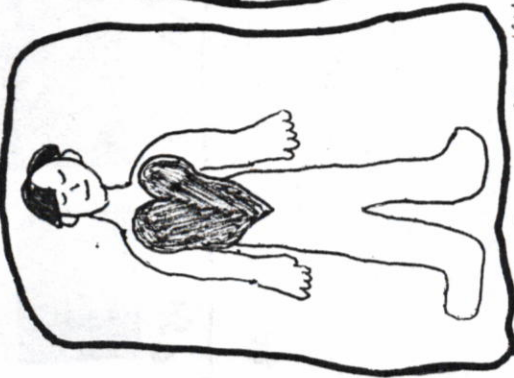
I ALWAYS WANTED TO BE PREPARED FOR ANY CIRCUMSTANCE THAT MAY ARRISE. I CARRIED PASSPORT PHOTOS & A WORLD ATLAS AROUND IN CASE I EVER MANAGED TO SCROUNGE UP A FEW HUNDRED DUCKS TO LEAVE NORTH AMERICA WITH. I ALWAYS TRAVELLED WITH A GRAUZE HIPPIE SKIRT IN CASE I NEEDED A BREAK FROM PANTS, BUT I NEVER WORE IT BECAUSE PEOPLE TRIED TO BUY DRUGS FROM ME EVERY TIME I DID. I HAD A CAN OPENER WITH ME EVEN THOUGH I NEVER HAD INTERCOURSE.

THOUGH I'D NEVER HAD THE SUM TOTAL OF MY CASHIALLY BELONGINGS I'D HAD TO KEEP THE SUM TOTAL THAT I WAS INTIMIDATED BY THE UNDER 60 POUNDS FOR SO LONG THAT I WAS INTIMIDATED BY THE IDEA OF LARGE, EMPTY SPACES TO FILL. STILL, EVERY ONCE IN AWHILE I'D THINK ABOUT BUYING A HUGE OLD HOUSE WITH TEN FRIENDS. CHEAP, & IN A RURAL SETTING. WE COULD ALWAYS GO THERE WHEN WE DIDN'T HAVE ANYPLACE BETTER TO BE. RETREAT.

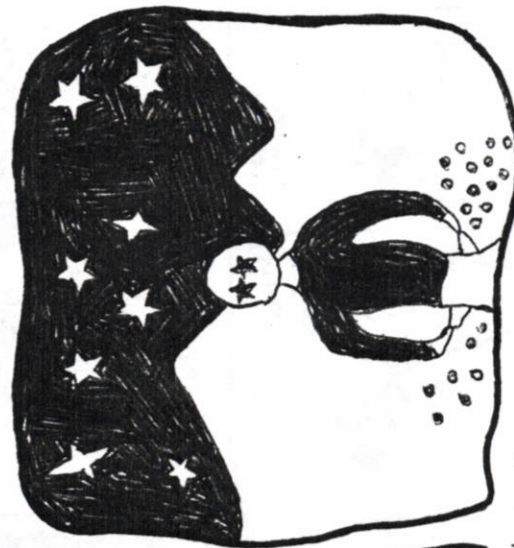
DON'T ASKED ME WHY I'D RETURNED TO CHICAGO, & I ADMITTED THAT IT WAS BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE ANYTHING BETTER TO DO. "WHEN IS THIS GONNA STOP?" HE ASKED, SMILING. I KNEW IT WASN'T MEANT TO BE HARSH, BUT I TOOK IT PRETTY HARD. I FELT GUILTY FOR BEING A TRAVELLER. GUILTY FOR HAVING NO REASON TO BE ANYWHERE IN PARTICULAR.

ANYWHERE ELSE I KNEW HAD IT EASY. THEY SIMPLY FELT IN EVERYONE ELSE I KEPT HOPING THAT WOULD LOVE & FOLLOWED THEIR HEART. I KEPT HOPING THAT WOULD HAPPEN TO ME. I TRIED ESPECIALLY HARD TO DEVELOP CAUSES OR PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN TOWNS I ESPECIALLY LIKED. NEVER-VISTED CITIES WERE ESPECIALLY VULNERABLE: DULUTH, OTTAWA, NASHUA. IT DIDN'T HAVE TO BE A PARTICULARLY HABITABLE PLACE-IN FACT, IT WAS BETTER IF IT WASN'T. THAT WAY, I COULD GET THE PERSON TO FUN AWAY WITH ME. TWO RESTLESS SOULS INSTEAD OF ONE.

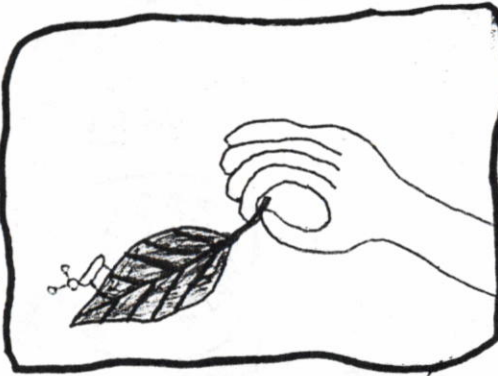
HOW TO KNOW THAT YOU'VE GOT A HEART FOR CERTAIN



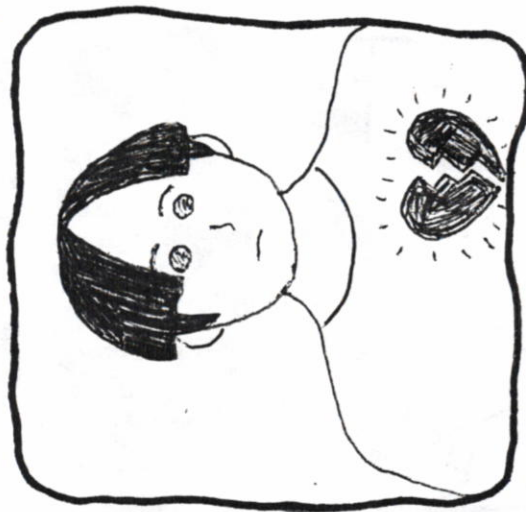
IT FILLS UP WITH SO MUCH LOVE WHEN YOU'RE AROUND HER THAT YOU CAN'T EAT. THERE'S NOT ENOUGH ROOM LEFT IN YOUR CHEST, AND BESIDES, YOU'RE NOT HUNGRY.



YOU'VE WISHED ON SO MANY STARS THAT YOU CAN'T TELL ONE FROM THE OTHER, & YOUR POCKETS ARE LEADEN BECAUSE YOU'VE PICKED UP A MILLION PENNIES IN HOPE THAT ONE MIGHT PROVE TO BE LUCKY.



YOU SPEND HALF AN HOUR RESCUING DROWNING BUGS UPON ENTERING THE POOL.



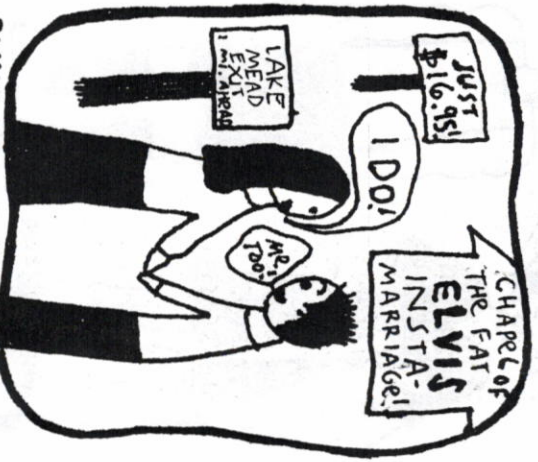
WELL, IT'S JUST LIKE THE TIMMAN SAID - "NOW I KNOW I'VE GOT A HEART, BECAUSE I CAN FEEL IT BREAKING."



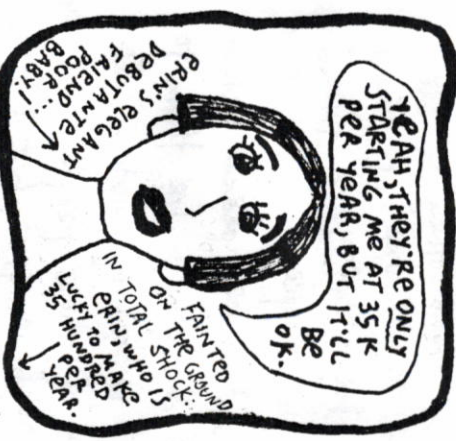
you know those people who never say a word, & leave everyone wondering what they're all about? i've always wanted to be one of them. their taciturn nature makes everyone formulate elaborate fantasies about them. people imagine that they must have some great inner peace behind their silence, and wait stentively for them to speak & drop some great nugget of wisdom into our laps. i'll never be one of those people. i'll never join their ranks, that much is true, but i find some comfort in the knowledge that my true personality is almost immediately apparent. i make my friends quickly, but i make my enemies even more quickly.

Over the hill

I MUST REALLY BE GETTING OLD, CAUSE...



...PEOPLE MY AGE ARE STARTING TO MARRY, WHEREAS I CONSIDER A MONTH-LONG FILING TO BE A "LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP."



...PEOPLE ARE STARTING TO USE THE WORD "CAREER" IN THEIR EVERYDAY CONVERSATION. ACK! IT'S THE DREADED "REAL JOB"!

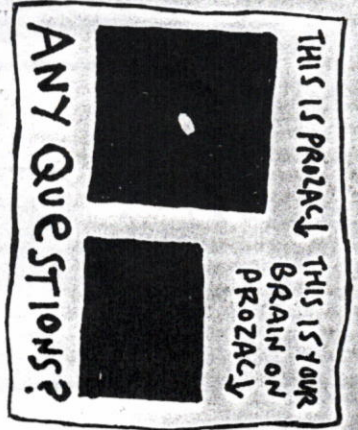


...HALF OF MY MALE FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES HAVE STARTED BALDING... I COULDN'T CARE LESS, BUT IT SEEMS TO BUG SOME OF THEM A LOT.



MY ONLY CONSOLATION IS THAT MY OILY SKIN INSURES I'LL BE WRINKLE-FREE WELL INTO MY FOURTH DECADE... I GUESS THOSE YEARS OF ACNE PAID OFF AFTER ALL!

BUT WHAT DO YOU ABOUT IT WHEN YOU CAN'T AFFORD A PSYCHOLOGIST & YOU'RE NOT SURE YOU WANT ONE? WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR THOUGHT PATTERNS INTERRUPT YOUR LIFE PATTERNS & EVEN MORALISSEY'S EMPATHY FAILS TO PREVENT YOU FROM WAVING DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO THE DEEP END? I KNOW I DIDN'T WANT TO TAKE ANY PILLS.



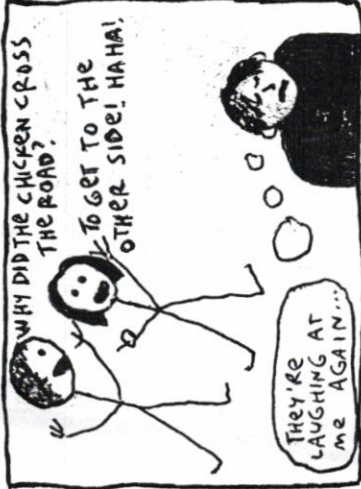
I TRIED THE EVER-POPULAR ST. JOHN'S WORT AND SUPPLEMENTED MY DIET WITH B6—TWO COMMON REMEDIES FOR DEPRESSION & ANXIETY, RESPECTIVELY. WHEN NEITHER WORKED, I BECAME JADED ON THE IDEA OF HOMOEOPATHY HELPING TO HEAL MOOD DISORDERS—BUT WHAT WOULD?

WHAT IF NOTHING HELPED?



STRANGELY ENOUGH, IMAGINING THE WORST WAS THE MOST COMFORTABLE SCENARIO OF ALL. ACCEPTING THAT I'LL ALWAYS THINK ABOUT THINGS IN A DIFFERENT MANNER THAN THE REST OF THE WORLD, & TRYING TO CHANNEL THOSE IMPULSES TOWARDS CREATION RATHER THAN SELF-DESTRUCTION. US CRAZY FOLK, AFTER ALL, ARE THE ONLY ONES WILD ENOUGH TO HAVE PINK HAIR DYE NAMED AFTER US!!!

STICK!



IT'S BEEN THIS WAY ALL MY LIFE. THE VOICES IN MY HEAD. THE ONES THAT MADE ME THINK THE WORLD WAS CONSPIRING AGAINST ME - THAT EVERYBODY HATED ME, EVERYONE THOUGHT I WAS UGLY & STUPID, AND EVERYONE WAS AFRAID OF ME. IF I WAS MORE RATIONAL, I'D HAVE KNOWN HOW CONCEITED I WAS BEING - EVERYBODY HAD FAR IMPORTANT THINGS TO WORRY ABOUT THAN ERIN WILLIAMS.

THAT'S THE THING, HOWEVER. MY MIND ISN'T RATIONAL - HARDLY. I'VE AVOIDED THE TERM FOR FAR TOO LONG, FEARING THE STIGMA THAT IT WILL INEVITABLY BRING UPON MENTION, BUT LATELY THE VOICES HAVE GOTTEN SO LOUD AND SO PERSISTENT THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE THING I CAN ATTRIBUTE THEM TO - AND THAT IS MENTAL ILLNESS.

"PEOPLE WHO FEEL UNCOMFORTABLE IN A GIVEN SITUATION OR NEAR A CERTAIN OBJECT WILL BEGIN TO AVOID IT. HOWEVER, SUCH AVOIDANCE CAN LIMIT A PATIENT'S ABILITY TO LIVE A NORMAL LIFE." AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION

THE WORST PART ABOUT "COMING OUT" AS MENTALLY ILL IS THAT EVERYONE TRIES TO TELL YOU THAT YOU'RE WRONG. "EVERYONE'S GOT THEIR UPS & DOWNS" THEY SAY. "THINGS WILL GET BETTER." THOSE PEOPLE THAT LIKEN EXISTENCE TO A ROUQUET COASTER, THOSE PEOPLE DON'T SEEM TO UNDERSTAND THE FACT THAT YOUR BRAIN IS MISSING A FEW CHEMICALS.



THE HOUSE WAS HUGE, & I KNEW ITS LAYOUT LIKE THE BACK OF MY HAND. I'D BAKED COOKIES FOR EVERYONE - CHOCOLATE CHIP - BUT I ENDED UP GORGING ON ALL OF THEM MYSELF LIKE THEY WERE GOING OUT OF STYLE. HE CAME OVER & STUCK A TAPE OF THAT FIFTIES TUNE IN THE TAPE DECK - "EARTH ANGEL". IN MY DREAM, IT WASN'T A BALLAD BUT A FRANTIC DANCE NUMBER. I STRUTTED MY STUFF, IMPRESSING HIM WITH MY FANCY FOOTWORK. WHEN THE NEXT SONG WAS REVEALED TO BE A SLOW ONE, I FIGURED I OUGHT TO REST AWHILE, BUT HE'D HAVE NOTHING OF IT. HE HELD OUT HIS ARMS, INDICATING THAT HE WANTED TO JOIN ME FOR A SLOW DANCE, & FROM THE GET-GO WE STOOD AS CLOSE AS COULD POSSIBLY BE. IT WAS SOMETHING SUBLIME & WHICH I'D NEVER EXPERIENCED THE LIKES OF. I RAN MY HAND UP & DOWN HIS BACK, ALLOWING THE CURRENTS OF WARMTH TO ELECTRIFY ME. I NOTICED THAT HE WAS FLESHIER THAN THE BAGS OF BONES THAT I USUALLY FOUND MYSELF ATTRACTED TO, BUT HE STOPPED SHORT OF BEING AT ALL CHUBBY. AFTER THE DANCE I HURRIED AWAY & DESCENDED A SET OF STAIRS. EVERYONE WAS TEASING ME, ASKING IF I HAD A CRUSH ON THIS MYSTERIOUS FELLOW WHO I DANCED WITH. I BLUSHED, FEIGNING DISINTEREST IN THEIR INTER-O-GATIONS, & INSTEAD CONCENTRATED ON THE PURSUIT OF MORE CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES. ALTHOUGH MORE MINUTES HAD PASSED, THE TREATS WERE NOW STALE. ADDITIONALLY, CHOCOLATE CAKE HAD BEEN SET DOWN IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PILE, CAUSING THEM TO BECOME STICKY AND GOOEY. ALL OF MY FRIENDS WERE IN THE BUILDING, HELPING ME TO CELEBRATE THE PAGAN/ANARCHIST PRE-HALLOWEEN HOLIDAY. WE HAD A RED TREE RESEMBLING THE KIND THAT SO MANY PEOPLE ERECT AT CHRISTMAS TIME, & I SPOTTED A FRIEND I'D ALWAYS KNOWN TO BE STRAIGHT CARRESSING AN EXTREMELY FEMME WOMAN ON THE COUCH. AT ONE POINT SHE GETS UP TO SHOW OFF THE LUXURY CAR SHE PLANS TO TAKE A ROAD TRIP IN. ANOTHER FRIEND IS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE STAIRCASE WHICH DESCENDS FROM THE DANCE FLOOR, SHOWING EVERYONE A DRAWING OF A PUNK ROCKER WHICH SHE'S DONE ON A DRY-ERASE BOARD. SHE ANNOUNCES LOUDLY THAT IT IS CALLED "FUCK-TOUR BLUE HAIR." A CHILDHOOD FRIEND IS IN THE BACK OF A PICK-UP TRUCK WITH A SHELL ON TOP. HER & I DISCUSS NON-MONOGAMY AS IT APPLIES TO HER RELATIONSHIP WITH HER BOYFRIEND, WHO HAS ALREADY BROKEN UP WITH HER. I LATER DISCOVER THAT HE (HIS NAME IS TONY) HAS DIED OF A DISEASE CALLED GENETIC CYSTITIS, WHICH (IN MY DREAM) TURNS OUT TO BE SIMILAR TO CYSTIC FIBROSIS. HE WAS, IN FACT, DEAD AT THE TIME OF THE DISCUSSION. A FAKE SHOOT OUT IS SCHEDULED WHICH WILL BE PHOTOGRAPHED FOR HUMOR VALUE. WHEN THE COPS HEAR GUNSHOTS THE PARTY IS OVER, & A FINAL PICTURE'S TAKEN. I STAND IN FRONT OF A FRIEND WHO HAS A HARD-ON, BUT I'M ATTRACTED TO HIM SO I DON'T MIND. EVERYONE TRIES TO HIDE IN BATHTUBS & CLOSETS, BUT I PLAN ESCAPE. I ENTER A ROOM WHERE A BREASTFEEDING WOMAN SITS, GRAB MY BACKPACK, & CHANGE INTO A GAUZE HIPPIE DRESS. MY EYESIGHT BLURS, I TRIP OVER MIDGETS INTO A TRENCH WITH A CREEK OVERFLOWING WITH FAGS. ESCAPE!



REASONS TO SPANK THE LITTLE MONKEY



1. USUALLY IT'S BECAUSE I'M ANGRY. PLEASURING MYSELF IS ONE THING I HAVE CONTROL OVER; NOT THE GOVERNMENT, NOT THE PATRIARCHY, & NOT THE CHRISTIAN RIGHT!

2. SOMETIMES I MASTURBATE BECAUSE I'M LONELY. BEING DOWN YOUR PANTS IS A TRULY HORRIBLE FEELING, BUT I OFTEN FIND REASSURANCE THAT I'VE STILL GOT THE LOVE OF ROSY PALMER, THRU GOOD + BAD.



3. I WOULDN'T KNOW, BUT TROY SAYS JEALOUSY OFF CAN HELP A PERSON FORGET ABOUT THAT GOD-AWFUL HANGOVER.

4. WELL, LET'S FACE IT... SOMETIMES I'M JUST PLAIN HORNY. MORRISSEY CLEAR 1985 WORKS WELL AS A SELF-STIMULATION FANTASY, BY THE WAY OR SO I HEAR.

(BUT WHO THE HELL NEEDS A REASON?)

Your Looks

MY LIFE WAS A MESS UNTIL THE DAY I FOUND THIS BOOK, "DISCIPLINES OF THE BEAUTIFUL WOMAN" IN THE TEMPE LIBRARY'S FREEBIN. NOW GOD & MY HUSBAND BOTH LOVE ME AGAIN, & I OWE IT ALL TO THE RULE OF 1/22! HALLELUJAH!

God forbid that anybody but my husband should see me the way I look when I first get out of bed. (He loves me very much.) Some women are just naturally gorgeous. Our daughter-in-law Jani is as beautiful when she steps out of her house for an Pacific Ocean surf as when she steps out of her part Indian. evening date. Nels says it's because she's part Indian. But me? For one thing, I haven't any eyes. I mean they just don't seem to be there until a little eye shadow makes them emerge into view. Maybe it's because of my own particular handicaps, but my advice to all is: when you first become conscious in the morning, get decent. I know some people say have your devotions first, but don't you sort of feel sorry for God when daily he has to face all those millions of hair curlers and old robes? What if you were the Almighty, and got prayed to with words spoken through all those unbrushed teeth? It seems to me like the ultimate test of grace.

Once I was studying Proverbs 31, the description of a "worthy woman," and it struck me in a new light. I noticed that twenty-two verses describe this woman's kindness, godliness, hard work, loving relationships—and only one verse out of the twenty-two describes how she looked. But she looked simply great! Verse twenty-two says, "She makes coverings for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple." Purple was the fabric of the wealthy. Seeing this kind of proportion in Proverbs 31—one verse out of twenty-two describes her good looks—I prayed, "Father, I want to give 1/22 of my time to making myself as outwardly beautiful as I can; and I want to give all the rest of my time, 21/22 of my life, to becoming wise, kind, godly, hard-working, and the rest." I don't mean that this should be a pattern for any other woman; this is simply the pact that I made personally with the Lord. What it means is that out of every twenty-four hours I give a little over one hour to my looks.